

upper thin air—in the film of space which separates earth from heaven—borne hither by the simoon, thither by the anti-trades, hurled in the vortex of a cyclone and precipitated in mid-ocean by a down-falling mass of vapor. Then, perhaps, seized by the waves, and rocked and beaten at the surface till it reached a zone of calm, it began its silent descent into the dark world where it is destined to rest undisturbed for centuries.

Here too is cosmic dust. The seeds of worlds have been sprinkled through space, and some of them have been planted in the soil of this abyss. These minute globules of magnetic iron were sparks emitted from a burning meteor. The meteor was a small mass or particle of material stuff coursing swiftly through the cold interplanetary spaces. It pierced the atmosphere of the earth; the friction resulting ignited the meteor, and for a brief moment it painted a fiery streak in its flight, when all had been transformed to ashy particles which floated in the air like volcanic dust, until it found, at last, a resting place in the cold bed of the Atlantic. What a reversal of fortune was here! The particle might have swept on through space, as many of its companions did, until it became part of a glowing comet. Perhaps it once shone in a star—now it is dead for a cycle of ages. It is an impressive thought that here, in this rayless night, we find the black ruins of a star. The realities of material history exceed in wonder all the fictions of imagination.

We still stand wondering over the scene which surrounds us. How oppressive is this silence. How welcome would be the cheerful chirp of the sparrow. Even the piping of the hated mosquito would break the eternal monotony. From age to age this reign of death persists. A chill which is more than icy, pierces us to the marrow. Sometimes, as we grope through the Egyptian gloom, we kick the bones of aquatic creatures which have perished in the water above us. Often their kind is still in existence; but sometimes their species are long extinct. Here are teeth of sharks and ear-bones of whales which have lain during geologic ages. Grand vicissitudes